

**Tennessee Board of Regents**  
SWOT Analysis Committee Findings

	Enrollment/Persistence	Institution Quality	Affordability	External Influences
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lottery scholarship facilitates access to higher education in Tennessee by academically gifted students, though it has the effect of lowering the financial desirability of community college attendance.</li> <li>Tuition and fees in Tennessee are average among SREB states and below the US average.</li> <li>System governance structure should facilitate the possibility of close coordination between universities and community colleges to increase graduation rates in TBR institutions through articulation agreements, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Faculty SACS Credentialed</li> <li>Good ratio of full time to part time faculty at University level</li> <li>Professional Development opportunities provided to maintain teaching and research credentials</li> <li>Good ratio of “professionals” to “academics”</li> <li>Undergraduate students at our universities are taught mostly by full-time faculty who have a terminal degree</li> <li>Pass rates on licensure exams are competitive with national averages</li> <li>Good faculty/staff throughout the TBR</li> <li>Gubernatorial emphasis on economic leadership by institutions of higher education</li> <li>Strong non-degree granting programs through the TTC’s</li> <li>TTC’s and community colleges emphasize job placement for their communities</li> <li>Strong business and nursing programs of study at the community colleges</li> <li>Strong transition programs [general education, AA and AS] of study to the four-year institutions at the community colleges</li> <li>Articulation policy to move students from the TTC’s to the community colleges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lottery Scholarships have provided awareness and opportunities for higher education</li> <li>The public understands that higher education is tuition driven</li> <li>Lottery funds may be adjusted to</li> <li>Most funds available are for four year universities</li> <li>Room for growth in development and private donations (local color)</li> <li>Cost of education is centralized and can be coordinated via Central Office</li> <li>Growth in Sponsored Research programs in the last five years (pending data)</li> <li>Growth in Private Donations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spikes in enrollment based on economy</li> <li>Affordability</li> <li>HOPE Scholarships and TELS Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant (WNTSG)</li> <li>Community confidence in Presidential leadership</li> <li>Colleges ,universities and Technology Centers seen as critical to their local regions</li> <li>Workforce Development--- Large number of high school student and adults who might enroll in community colleges and technology centers who want quick training for a new career</li> <li>Communication networks – Access to state wide data network (NetTenn) and local access to reasonably fast and affordable voice and data services at the campus. Access to national research networks (I2) to support advanced research &amp; collaboration within TBR, across the state and region, and nationally.</li> <li>New value placed on education as an advantage in the employment marketplace, recognized need/emphasis to improve college going rates, and TBR is uniquely positioned across the state with affordable costs</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good DSP programs experimenting with making the remediation programs stronger, and more time and economically viable for students thus moving the student more rapidly toward occupational goals</li> <li>• Students who complete a program of study in the health sciences, business, or technology generally have marketable skills that enable them to find employment</li> <li>• Some universities have substantially increased external funding by placing greater emphasis upon their research mission</li> <li>• Many academic programs enjoy a national reputation for excellence</li> <li>• A large number of community colleges throughout the state provide a very cost effective means for Tennessee residents to pursue a higher education</li> <li>• Community colleges and universities have worked closely to develop a smooth articulation process.</li> <li>• Job placement rates of community college graduates are comparable to our peers</li> <li>• Some universities have increased the number of doctoral and professional degrees awarded, especially in the health sciences, to meet regional and national demands</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RODP and on line learning initiatives are very strong</li> <li>• Corporate donations</li> <li>• Attractive to high skills industries</li> <li>• Educational environment attractive to out-of-state students</li> <li>• State level articulation agreements and pathways from technology centers to community college to universities</li> <li>• Industry certifications both nationally and state level</li> <li>• Short turn around for the development of special industry programs to meet needs</li> </ul>

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Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relatively low percentage of Tennesseans with college degrees may contribute to a social and political climate which tends to undervalue higher education.</li> <li>• Six year graduation rates for TBR institutions fall below US and SREB averages. From 1996 to 2001, Tennessee’s six-year graduation rate actually declined by 1 percentage point. The average three-year graduation rate for full-time freshmen who first enrolled in Tennessee community colleges to pursue associate’s degrees or vocational certificates falls below US and SREB averages.</li> <li>• Currently, there are not enough qualified faculty to train students for the career areas in which workers are most needed in this state.</li> <li>• Most TBR campuses do not yet have a rich first-year experience that extends well beyond the classroom.</li> <li>• The goal of increasing graduates of Tennessee institutions will require significant enrollments of non-traditional students, who pose special persistence challenges.</li> <li>• Because the postsecondary education attainment levels of Tennessee’s resident adults are well below the national average, an increase in enrollment will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor ratio of full time to part time faculty at Community College level</li> <li>• Inconsistent Professional Development may result in under prepared faculty</li> <li>• Salary no longer at market range within SREB</li> <li>• Sometimes difficult to get hiring approval for “high powered” professionals who lack advanced academic degrees</li> <li>• Too much paperwork and too many reporting requirements</li> <li>• Limited or isolated partnerships with business and industry</li> <li>• Non-equitable service to business and industry throughout the state</li> <li>• Recent reductions of continuing education staff due to budgetary concerns</li> <li>• Limited or isolated partnerships with other state agencies</li> <li>• Lack of quantifiable data reporting economic leadership elements [e.g. transfer or application of patents to public sector; applied research grants; non-credit participant numbers; WIA-funded and other economic leadership grants; economic impact studies]</li> <li>• Understaffed Research &amp; Assessment unit at TBR</li> <li>• Philosophical move of TBR and community college leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and Communication Barriers to Access to Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Financial aid availability and income levels of Tennessee citizens has not kept pace with tuition increases</li> <li>○ Poorer and/or rural families are not aware of availability of aid and therefore do not see higher education as an option</li> <li>○ Lack of financial planning and research of cost on the part of families who have the income resources</li> <li>○ Lack of need-based opportunities available to adult students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Under-utilization of potential grant-writing opportunities</li> <li>• Declining levels of state support of higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School’s outreach to the communities</li> <li>• External scholarship GPA requirements</li> <li>• Getting to potential adult students</li> <li>• Program and service duplication</li> <li>• Distance Education</li> <li>• New Veterans Benefits</li> <li>• Size of adult populations without degrees</li> <li>• Large pool of high school students not prepared for college level work</li> <li>• Need to upgrade IT infrastructure on campuses &amp; across the state (“last mile”). IT infrastructure at most schools is not capable of handling increased loads, HD interactive broadcast, etc</li> <li>• Overall lack of support for technology in the classrooms, for research, and for outreach</li> <li>• Expensive and ineffective strategy to support administrative technology on campuses. Too many dollars spent on administrative technology and not enough on teaching, learning and research technology.</li> <li>• IT Contract</li> <li>• Uncertainty in future leadership and direction of higher education system</li> <li>• 2 year schools and 4 year schools have very different IT</li> </ul>

	<p>have to rely on a greater than average number of 1st generation college students, with their concomitant persistence issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tennessee’s production of degrees and other higher education credentials, as compared with its investment in higher education, is relatively poor compared to other states.</li> <li>• Tennessee’s current K-12 system is producing a significant number of graduates who cannot attend an institution of higher learning without taking remedial and/or developmental courses.</li> </ul>	<p>from the comprehensive mission of the community college</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent vocational and academic counseling of students</li> <li>• Too much politicking at the state level with regards to new programs</li> <li>• People with no background in higher education (except for a college degree) seem to have a disproportionate amount of influence in regards to higher education decisions</li> <li>• Too much deference given to UT and TSU</li> <li>• Some of our institutions need to increase the rigor of some of their academic programs in order to attain excellence, to help ensure their graduates acquire the knowledge and skills that will give them a competitive advantage in the job market, or to otherwise help them meet their educational objectives</li> <li>• Affordability issues prevent too many students in our service areas from enrolling</li> <li>• Retention and graduation rates are lower than our peers-- indicative of problems in getting students connected, in overcoming their financial problems or other barriers to success, or in their academic performance</li> </ul>		<p>needs and challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low persistence to graduation rate; factors leading to stop-out/drop-out</li> <li>• Workforce viewed as underprepared for demands of current/future technology jobs</li> <li>• Per FTE funding in lower range compared to SREB states</li> <li>• Attracting and retaining younger generation into higher education, especially among minority populations, which happens to be the fastest growing population</li> </ul>
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Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennessee’s population is expected to increase by 7% from 2008 to 2018, though six other SREB states will see even more significant population increases.</li> <li>New technologies, including web-based courses, will make it easier to serve students without regard to their location and without significant new capital expenditures. Additionally, technology offers support for course redesign for at least some courses which would reduce instructional costs in those courses and increase learning outcomes.</li> <li>Dual-credit, dual-enrollment, and dual-admissions programs could increase the number of students prepared to enter college.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This may be an excellent time to hire qualified faculty who are now looking to relocate</li> <li>Through partnerships with business and industry, the creation of new faculty endowments for new programs may be possible.</li> <li>Create in-house professional development for faculty</li> <li>May need to look at adding clinical-type instructors to departments that traditionally have not used clinicians</li> <li>Let’s see if we can eliminate some/most of the duplicative reporting.</li> <li>We need to find a way for TBR to assist the academic community in asserting itself through the electoral process.</li> <li>New federal funding sources for economic leadership initiatives such as in green job education and training</li> <li>TBR beginning to renew economic and labor department ties for all levels of higher education (not just TTC’s) TBR beginning to develop new business/industry partnerships.</li> <li>New emphasis beginning with emphases to raise academic level of incoming freshmen through multiple initiatives (e.g. Tennessee Diploma Project, Ramp-up, Gear-up, math “bridge” courses, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of cost estimators at community colleges and universities. This is a federal requirement to be implemented by July 2010. The estimator should be clearly placed on school websites and publicized in a variety of school recruitment and informational materials.</li> <li>Partnership with K-12 to stimulate discussions of affordability, cost estimates, types of available aid, etc., at the middle-school level. It will be beneficial to plant these seeds of opportunity prior to students entering the secondary educational years. Perhaps partner with the State’s “100% Graduation” campaign.</li> <li>Encourage the use of free resources available to our K-12 partners that are available at <a href="http://www.fsapubs.gov">www.fsapubs.gov</a>. Most of these are available in both English and Spanish.</li> <li>Campaign to our legislators and other elected officials the need for, and benefits of, need based aid programs for adult students.</li> <li>Increase awareness of the free services offered to our adult and first generational students by our TRiO programs.</li> <li>Intentional marketing strategies to attract adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance Education</li> <li>New Veterans Benefits</li> <li>Size of adult populations without degrees</li> <li>Academic quality of the universities</li> <li>Intervention by higher education to assist in STEM areas</li> <li>Growth in on-line enrollment</li> <li>TBR institutional locations around the state</li> <li>Opportunity to rethink internal governance and decision making processes</li> <li>Opportunity to rethink external governance and decision making processes</li> <li>Rise in unemployment</li> <li>Student achievement initiative; Momentum Point Calculation</li> <li>Compare TN system level data to other system level data</li> <li>Emerging technologies/trends in the labor market</li> <li>Growing Hispanic population with corresponding educational needs</li> <li>Working with sister institutions to coordinate TTC graduates to continue education</li> <li>Changing industry needs provide opportunities for working together</li> <li>Low state tax rate, compared to SREB and national index, favorable to attracting industries</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to involve faculty in efforts to gain support from external funding sources. Faculty/programs need to become more involved in the public face of the colleges and universities</li> <li>• Can we find a way to encourage more cross-discipline teaching for courses that have the same general content except for a small department-specific component.</li> <li>• Admissions standards are too low and some modifications are needed to improve the quality of students we admit</li> <li>• Generally, our curricula need to place greater emphasis upon improving critical thinking, written and oral communications, computing skills, use of information technologies, problem-solving, and interpersonal/social skills</li> <li>• Institutions should place more emphasis upon economic development by anticipating workforce needs for the 21st century and then by modifying their curricula and degree programs to match those needs</li> <li>• Faculty/staff salaries need to be increased substantially in order to attract and attain quality employees</li> <li>• State appropriations per FTE student need to be increased substantially while minimizing increases in tuition and student fees.</li> </ul>	<p>students; Veterans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement intentional plans to grow our grant-writing programs. Grant programs for need-based opportunities and/or affordability communication programs for rural areas or for adult students would be beneficial.</li> <li>• Partner with THEC on the annual tuition cost increases</li> <li>• Strategically enroll more individuals in low producing programs</li> <li>• Potential to expand R&amp;D funding with industry, etc.</li> <li>• Expand revenue by licensing of intellectual property</li> <li>• Seek alternative methods of</li> <li>• Inject more resources into fund raising. Many campuses do not have adequate staff or do not utilize fund raising to its fullest potential. This may be more of a need for campus initiatives than a TBR initiative, but perhaps TBR could help educate campuses on how to improve fund raising efforts or how to retool their staffs to perform fund raising efforts.</li> <li>• Utilize or maximize prospecting methods or tools. There are prospecting vendors and software that help institutions better identify potential donors. Again while this may be more of a campus initiative, perhaps TBR could assist with contract issues or help interested campuses negotiate a group deal with vendors.</li> </ul>	
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Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many Tennessee high school students are unprepared for college-level work.</li> <li>• Increasing educational costs will limit access to higher education unless financial aid keeps pace with these costs. Tennessee is on the verge of moving from a moderate tuition to a relatively high tuition state as state support for higher education declines.</li> <li>• Political leaders may seek to increase enrollments and graduates of Tennessee institutions without making a concomitant commitment of additional resources to higher education. From 2003 to 2008, funding from state appropriations and tuition and fees per FTE student for public universities increased by 3 percent, after adjustment for inflation, compared to an average increase of 9 percent for other SREB states. Tuition and fees amount to a larger proportion of the sum of state appropriations plus tuition and fees than the SREB average.</li> <li>• The fastest growing demographic of high school graduates over the next fifteen years will be Hispanic students, but nationally, this category of students has a lower than average tendency to enroll in college. Those who enroll are more likely to be first-generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in State funding will result in fewer fiscal and personnel resources to hire new or additional faculty.</li> <li>• Loss of accreditation if full time to part time faculty ratio falls below minimum standards</li> <li>• Loss of existing faculty and inability to hire new faculty if salary remains below SREB peers</li> <li>• General distrust of faculty for administration; every change is seen as a threat</li> <li>• What appears to be a general lack of understanding on the part of the legislature as to the mission of higher education in Tennessee</li> <li>• Trying to fit higher education into a factory model; perception at the state level that faculty are mere cogs in the “light industrial” education machine</li> <li>• Gubernatorial support of only one (maybe two) research-level institution</li> <li>• Limited vision by other state agencies that only the TTC’s are the economic leadership elements of the TBR</li> <li>• State budget seeing diminished revenues for the foreseeable future</li> <li>• Lack of statewide vision for economic leadership, particularly in the area of integration of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition Costs</li> <li>• Lack of preparedness (both academic and informational) during the secondary school years</li> <li>• Unstable economy could further impact the cost of education</li> <li>• Declining value of the US dollar</li> <li>• Decline in state appropriations</li> <li>• Slow/limited growth of NIH and NSF research support</li> <li>• Continued decline of state support</li> <li>• Reduced levels of private donations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in for profit schools</li> <li>• Distance Education/ on-line impact on on-campus</li> <li>• Rising or flat tuition</li> <li>• Politicizing education</li> <li>• Spikes in enrollment based on economy</li> <li>• Shifting Population with stagnant or declining college-age population</li> <li>• Some areas of the state are growing in population while others are losing population</li> <li>• TN traditionally one of the least educated states</li> <li>• Commercialization of college campuses</li> <li>• H1N1 Virus</li> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• “Methods” based education and rigid basis for credentialing teachers may inhibit opportunity to enlist retirees.</li> <li>• Right-sizing the number and types of programs at each school—political will to get this right.</li> <li>• Uncertain status of pool of international students</li> <li>• Increased bureaucracy/reporting requirements for compliance with regulations and mandates at all levels</li> <li>• Support for aging physical infrastructures on campus</li> <li>• Support for refilling positions left vacant by retiring faculty and staff</li> </ul>

	<p>college students, with concomitant persistence issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenge of producing more graduates in Tennessee will almost certainly require the cultivation of more creativity and innovation at the campus level, a creativity and innovation not always encouraged or permitted by current norms within the Board of Regents system.</li> <li>• Funding formulas based on graduation rates without cognizance of persistence issues facing particular subcategories of students such as nontraditional, low income, or minority students will undermine the larger goal of increasing the number of degrees in Tennessee.</li> <li>• Failure of higher education systems and institutions to explain rising educational costs will threaten public support for higher education.</li> <li>• Current hold harmless aspects of Tennessee’s funding formula result in diminished capacity of the state to allocate resources appropriately to institutions with increasing enrollments or graduation rates.</li> <li>• The growth in university faculty salaries in the SREB states over the last decade lags behind the salaries of workers generally, and TN faculty salaries rank 11th of the 16 SREB states. Faculty salaries for TN community college faculty rank 9th.</li> </ul>	<p>colleges within a plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding formulae of the State (i.e. THEC) that under-funds occupational, technical and workforce programs of study, both credit and non-credit</li> <li>• Continued need for remediation on high percentage of incoming traditional-age freshmen</li> <li>• What appears to be a general lack of understanding on the part of the legislature of the function of higher education in Tennessee</li> <li>• A weak economy and insufficient state revenues will deter opportunities to increase faculty/staff salaries or to support initiatives intended to maintain or improve the quality of our academic programs</li> <li>• The political climate will continue to impact how the governor and legislature choose to fund the TBR system as well as how the limited financial resources appropriated within it are divided</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Revenue shortfalls</li> <li>• Off-shore outsourcing of high-skill, high-wage jobs</li> <li>• Lower salary level per academic rank compared to peer systems</li> <li>• Lower staff salary level compared to peer systems</li> <li>• Negative state funding trend for higher education</li> <li>• Lower per capita income compared to SREB and national index</li> </ul>
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